

Story 1037 (1979 Transcript of Narrator: Marzika -----?
 tape made by
 Dr. Mehmet Yalvaç) Location: Vezirhan village,
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The Youngest Son and the Three Magic Gifts

Once there was and once there was not an old man who had three sons. A day came when the old man grew very ill and knew that he had not long to live. Calling his sons to his side, he divided his belongings among them. To the oldest son he gave a fur hat^{7,9}, to the middle son he gave a sheepskin; and to the youngest he gave a money purse. Soon after that, the old man died. The sons then set forth in three different directions to seek their fortunes. Although each of the two older sons wanted to take the youngest along with him, the youngest refused to either and so set forth alone

After traveling for some distance, the youngest brother arrived at a coffeehouse^{9,13}. All of the customers were talking among themselves about something, and all that he overheard of their conversation was this remark: "To see even one finger of that ravishing beauty one must pay forty purses of gold."

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The boy went apart and squeezed the neck of his purse.¹ An Arab² immediately came forth from the purse and said, "Wish for whatever you want from me." The boy wished for gold, and very quickly the Arab brought him a small pile of gold. Taking the gold at once to the home of the great beauty, he asked for admission. Instead of allowing him to enter, the nurses took from him not only the gold but also the gold-producing purse.³

Having lost the magic purse, the youngest son set out in the direction that the middle son had taken, and after some time he caught up with him. Crying loudly, he told his next older brother what had happened, and he begged that brother for his sheepskin. After pleading for some time, he was finally given the sheepskin. Although the youngest brother goaded the sheepskin from the left side and goaded the sheepskin from the right side, he was unable to make it produce any money. When an Arab finally responded to his

¹The father gave no indication that the objects given to his sons were magic, nor did he tell them how to make use of these objects. Apparently the narrator simply skipped this, for the youngest son immediately works the magic pattern.

²In Turkish folktales an Arab is usually black, and a magic jinn, such as the one who appears here, is virtually always black, often with unmistakable Negroid features. As a matter of fact, however, most Arabs are not black.

³There is clearly some truncating of the tale here, for we are not told how the nurses manage to wangle the purse away from the boy.

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goaded, the Arab said, "I cannot get any money for you, but I can take you anywhere that you want to go."

"Then take me to the home of the ravishing beauty who lives in such-and-such a place," said the youngest son. Climbing upon the sheepskin, he was carried quickly to the home of this beauty. When the nurses saw the boy, they recognized him at once, and they took the magic sheepskin away from him.⁴

As he had done before, the youngest son pursued one of his brothers again, this time the oldest brother. Whining and crying, he begged this brother to give him his fur hat. But the oldest brother objected to this idea, saying, "I cannot do that. This was a gift from our father. He gave each of us such a gift." After the youngest son had begged a while longer, however, the oldest son felt sorry for him and surrendered the hat.

Putting the fur hat on his head, the youngest brother now went to the coffeehouse where he had first heard about the ravishing beauty. As he entered the coffeehouse and sat down, he called out, "Selâmünaleyküm!"⁵

⁴The truncating here is obvious, and one can conclude that Marzika is not a good raconteur.

⁵The traditional greeting exchanged between Moslems not well-known to each other is Selâmünaleyküm/Aleykümselâm (Peace be unto you/Peace be unto you too). In the confusion here, no one gives the return greeting.

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This bewildered everyone who heard the greeting, and they asked, "Where are you, friend?"

"I am here. Bring me a glass of tea."

The waiter took a glass of tea to the table where the voice had seemed to come from, but there was no one there. "Where on earth are you?" asked the waiter.

"I am here."

The voice was there, but he could not be seen anywhere. He was really there, but he could not be seen because of the magic fur hat that he was wearing. As he spoke to the waiter the second time, he removed his hat, and to the amazement of everyone, he suddenly became visible. Several of those sitting closest to him asked at once, "Are you a human being or a jinn?"⁶

Placing the fur hat back on his head, the boy went to the home of the ravishing beauty. He grabbed her by the neck and squeezed so hard he almost killed her. He made no noise and said nothing while doing this. The people of the house shouted, "Are you a human being or a jinn?" but he did not answer. They brought in a hoca⁷ to

⁶This query is formulaic in Turkish, always the same: Inmisiin cinmisiin? It is asked of anyone who seems in any way uncanny.

⁷A Moslem preacher, similar to a priest

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rid the place of evil spirits, but he was completely unable to help the beauty and the other people of the household.

The boy then asked, "Do you remember throwing me out of the window? Well, now I am doing these things to you in return!"

Out of fear the nurses rushed from the house in search a witch woman. Finding such a woman, they took her to the house of the beauty and explained to her, "The situation here is such-and-such. What is the meaning of this? Is the beauty haunted?"

The witch woman said, "Find me a long locust thorn. Ravishing beauty, you help look for one, too. The intruder here must be wearing a cap of invisibility.⁸ I shall close my eyes and, swinging around and around, try to strike the cap with the thorn. I can then pull the cap off the intruder's head and he will be revealed

After the thorn had been brought to her, the witch woman did exactly what she said she would do. After a few minutes she hooked the thorn into the fur hat and pulled it the boy's head. They then saw standing there the same

⁸The cap of invisibility is a common motif in folktales, including Turkish folktales. Very rarely does any other garment provide invisibility. It is almost always a cap or hat.

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boy whom they had thrown out of the house twice before. Catching the boy and putting him in a sack, they gave him to two assassins, saying, "Take this person to some mountain and slaughter him there. If you fail to do this, we shall have this witch woman destroy you."

The assassins picked up the sack containing the boy and carried it to the mountains. When they opened the sack, however, and saw that it held only a young boy, they were unable to slaughter him. Tying him up again in the sack, they said, "We do not have to slay him. Just leaving him here will bring an end to his life." They left him there and went away.

Left alone, the boy took from his pocket his small pocketknife and cut his way out of the sack. Looking around on that mountain, he saw that there was nothing to eat or drink in that part of God's world, and so he began walking. He was very hungry, and he was cold, for it was winter and the weather was severe. After a while he came to a white fig bush ^{free 12-13} on which some figs still hung. "I can feed myself on these," he said. Picking several and putting them in his pockets, he began eating one as he walked along. After finishing that fig, he discovered that a horn had grown out of one side of his forehead. When he ate a second white fig, a matching horn grew from the other side

eye closed to
rough the

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of his brow. He cried for some time over his condition, but after a while he realized that there was nothing he could do but continue walking. After a while he came to a black fig tree. Still hungry, he picked some of its fruit and filled two more pockets with it. As he walked along, he ate one of the black figs, and one of his horns fell off. When he ate a second black fig, the other horn fell off

The boy continued walking to the village where the ravishing beauty lived. After a while, he became hungry again, but he would not allow himself to eat any of either the white figs or the black figs. Instead, he began grazing, eating the grass that grew along the road. After he had been doing this for a few minutes, he discovered that he had been turned into a ^{Transfere} donkey. After he had advanced a little farther, he again started grazing, and he then discovered that the grass there ^{Transfere} had turned him back into a human being again. Gathering one bunch of this human grass and one bunch of the donkey grass, he continued on his way

When he got back to the village he stopped at the coffeehouse where he had first heard about the ravishing beauty. He sold several of the customers there white figs for five liras apiece. He warned them not to eat these figs before they had counted, "One, two, three." But the cus-

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tomers gobbled down the delicious white figs at once, and they all grew horns.

Proceeding to the street on which the beauty's house located, he began shouting, "I have fresh figs for sale! I have fresh figs for sale!"

When the nurses in the beauty's house heard his call, they were greatly surprised. "Where could anyone ever get fresh figs in the middle of winter?" A total of forty-one people from the beauty's house went down to the street and bought white figs for five liras apiece. Again the boy warned the purchasers not to eat the figs until they had counted to three, but again the purchasers ignored his warning, and they all grew horns. The ravishing beauty had eaten two of the figs, and so she grew two horns. When those who had eaten the figs saw their horns, they all began to shout and scream, but by then the boy had disappeared.

Physician, skin After a few days the boy reappeared ^{disguise} on that same street, but this time he was wearing a doctor's gown and shouting, "I am a doctor! Does anyone need a doctor's service?"

From the house of the ravishing beauty came several voices saying, "Yes, we need you, doctor. Come in, doctor!" Selling each of them a black fig for five liras, he had warned them not to eat this fruit until he had led them in

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counting, "One, two, three." After they had all counted to three under his direction, they ate the black figs and had their horns removed. The boy then said, "Your horns have now been removed, but the roots of those horns still remain in your heads and they may grow forth again. On Friday you must go with me to a certain pasture outside of the village, and there I shall give you the medicine necessary to keep the horns from sprouting again."

Before Friday arrived, the boy went to a maker of packsaddles. He said, "I want you to make me forty-one packsaddles and deliver them on Friday to such-and-such a pasture."

On Friday the forty-one people from the ravishing beauty's house arrived at the pasture. The boy said to them, "When I count 'One, two, three,' each of you is to eat some of the grass in this field." He counted to three. The woman all ate some of the donkey grass that grew there, and they all turned into donkeys. Placing the packsaddles on the ravishing beauty and her forty attendants, the boy had them carry heavy loads of stones for several days. He then fed them some human grass, and they were all restored to their former shapes.

After apologizing to the youngest son for all of the

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difficulty they had caused him, the nurses said, "You will now be the bridegroom of our house, and the ravishing beauty will be your bride."